

TEACHERS' READING COURSE.

The Teachers' Reading Course is conducted by a committee of the Woman's Association for the Improvement of Schools. For full particulars as to cost, books, etc., address, Miss ADA V. WOMBLE, Secretary Raleigh, N. C.

Irving's "Discovery of America."—III.

This article is the third of a series on Washington Irving's "Discovery of America."

The first article roughly outlined the book, and gave some supplementary information about Maco Polo; the second, briefly outlined the history of the Moorish domination in Spain. The present subject of discussion is

THE PRE COLUMBIAN VOYAGES.

There have been many legends of pre-Columbian voyages to America. Some of these are within the limits of probability. The early chronicles of Ireland, however, give us credible, historic accounts of voyages to America more than five hundred years before the "Great Admiral" set out to prove his faith by his deeds. The "Hemiskringle," an Icelandic chronicle written in 1215 by Snorro Sturleson, is called by Mr. Fiske one of the greatest history books in the world.

In this chronicle Snorro tells of the shipwreck of one Gunnbjorn on the coast of Greenland. In the year 983, he says, Eric the Red, was outlawed from Iceland for killing a man. Sailing boldly westward with a few followers, he found the land which Gunnbjorn had described, and explored it—Greenland—on each side of the southernmost point, Cape Farewell. A little to the west of this cape, he and his followers made a settlement upon a part of the coast so pleasant that it well deserved the name of "Greenland." "And there upon a smooth grassy plain may still be seen the ruins of seventeen houses built of rough blocks of sandstone, their chinks caulked up with clay and ravel."

"This colonization of Greenland by the Northmen in the tenth century," says Mr. Fiske, "is as well established as any event that occurred in the Middle Ages. For four hundred years the fortunes of the Greenland colony formed a part, a very humble part, of European history."

This Eric the Red, founder of this colony, had a son named Leif, who spent a year or two in Norway about 998. There he became converted by Roman missionaries; he was baptized and upon his return to Greenland, he took priests with him, who converted many of his fellow-colonists. Old Eric the Red, it is said, "preferred to go in the way of his fathers, and deemed boisterous Valhalla, with its cups of wassail, a place of better cheer than the New Jerusalem, with its streets of gold." Being of an enterprising turn of mind, Leif explored the coasts to the south of Greenland. Finding a thickly-forested country, he gave it the name "Markland," or "Woodland," a territory generally believed to be Cape Breton Island or Nova Scotia. Putting to sea once more, and being

driven before a stiff northeaster, they sailed for two days before they saw land again. This time the land was so laden with grapes that Leif called it "Vinland." Various opinions have been expressed as to the location of Vinland. After weighing these opinions carefully, Mr. Fiske thinks that it was not farther north than Massachusetts Bay.

Leif went to Greenland in 1001. His brother Thorwald borrowed his ship and set out to see Vinland for himself. Thorwald being slain by the savages, a third brother, Thorstein, set out with his wife and a crew of thirty-five men. Thorstein died on the voyage, and his widow, Gudrid, returned to Greenland.

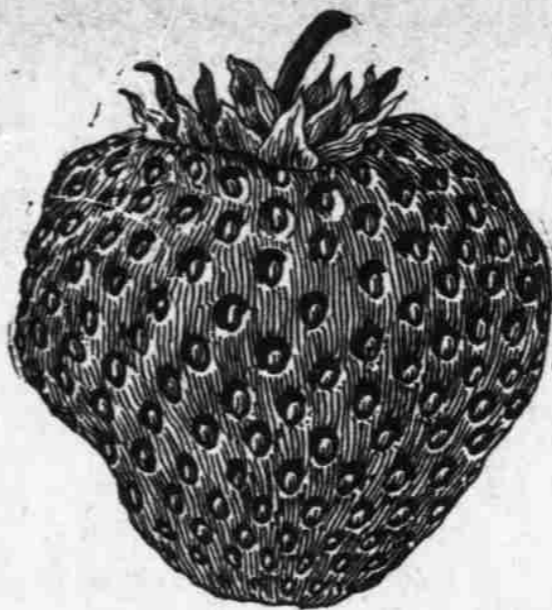
In 1006 Gudrid married a bold and wealthy Iclander, Thorfinu Karlsefni, by name. Deciding to found a colony in Vinland, they set out with several ships, one hundred and sixty men, several women, and a cargo of cattle.

In the course of the year, a little son was born to Thorfinu, whom he named Snorro. "To this boy Snorro many eminent men have traced their ancestry—bishops, university professors, governors of Iceland, and ministers of state in Norway and Denmark. The celebrated sculptor Thorwaldsen regarded himself as thus descended from Thorfinu Karlsefni."

When this little Snorro, the first white child born on this continent, so far as we know, was three years old, the colonists deserted Vinland on account of the hostility of the Indians, and returned to Greenland. Nor was there a permanent settlement ever made in Vinland. The colony in southern Greenland, while it never exceeded 5,000 or 6,000 people, kept up its intercourse with Europe for more than four hundred years. It seems wonderful to think that early in the fourteenth century, probably before Columbus was born, the settlements in southern Greenland contained 280 farmsteads, with one cathedral, fifteen smaller churches, two villages, and three or four monasteries. The latest notice that we have of the colony is that of a marriage ceremony performed in 1409 by Eudrede Andreason, the last bishop.

In 1721, about fifty years before the breaking out of our Revolutionary War, the great missionary, Hans Egede, visited Greenland, but he found only the ruins of farmsteads and villages, the population of which had disappeared.

These pre-Columbian voyages Mr. Fiske sum up thus: "To speak of them as constituting in any legitimate sense of the phrase, a Discovery of America, is simply absurd. Except for Greenland, which was supposed to be a part of the European world, America remained as undiscovered after the eleventh century as before. It is in the highest degree probable that Leif Ericsson and his friends made a few voyages to what we now know to have been the coast of America; but it is an abuse of language to say that they discovered America. In no sense was any real contact established between the eastern and the western halves of our planet until the great voyage of Columbus in 1492."



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